

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Today Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced that the FY09 Defense Appropriations bill approved yesterday by the U.S. House of Representatives includes \$1.2 million for the Massachusetts Center for Renewable Energy, Science and Technology (Mass-CREST) at UMass-Amherst.

Mass-CREST is a collaborative effort among chemists, physicists, polymer scientists and engineers.

The funding will be used to develop more efficient devices for converting sunlight to electricity, as well as technology to convert fuels, such as hydrogen, into more usable electric power with higher efficiency. This technology will be particularly useful to the military because efficient, reliable, lightweight, portable power generation will be key components of any future mobile fighting force.

"Society is slowly coming to the realization that the fuels we depend on are finite while energy demand worldwide is increasing. As our addiction to non-renewable sources of energy is forcefully broken out of necessity, we'll have the opportunity to really look at how we function and come up with more common-sense ways of getting things done," Congressman John Olver said. "This project is a perfect example. It simply makes sense that soldiers on the move in hazardous terrain, carrying heavy equipment, should utilize solar power rather than transporting heavy batteries or worry about finding other power sources."

"UMass Amherst is a national leader in the development of alternative energy technologies, and the research of our faculty will be further bolstered by this additional federal support, which Congressman Olver has taken a leadership role in securing," said Ed Blaguszewski, Director of News and Information at UMass –Amherst.

Olver is a member of the Appropriations Committee and worked to secure the funding in the bill.

Yesterday the House approved the Defense, Homeland Security, and Military Construction and Veterans Affairs appropriations bills. The remaining nine FY09 appropriations bills were passed in a continuing resolution package which funds government at FY08 levels until March. The Senate must now vote on the Defense Appropriations bill before it is sent to the president for his signature.

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